**World War II**

The start of the war is generally held to be September 1, 1939, with the German invasion of Poland

**Adolf Hitler**: 20 April 1889 – 30 April 1945) was an Austrian-born German politician and the leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party, popularly known as the Nazi Party. He was the ruler of Germany from 1933 to 1945, serving as chancellor from 1933 to 1945 and as head of state from 1934 to 1945

**[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Germany_1933.svg)Nazism**, officially in German as **National Socialism**, refers to the ideology and practices of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party or NSDAP under Adolf Hitler, and the policies adopted by the dictatorial government of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945.

[Adolf Hitler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolf_Hitler), after an [unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the German government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beer_Hall_Putsch) in 1923, became the [Chancellor of Germany in 1933](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hitler%27s_rise_to_power). He abolished [democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy), espousing a [radical racially motivated revision of the world order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazism_and_race), and soon began a massive rearming campaign.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wwii#cite_note-7) This worried France and the United Kingdom, who had lost much in the previous war, as well as Italy, which saw its territorial ambitions threatened by those of Germany.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wwii#cite_note-8) To secure its alliance, the [French allowed Italy a free hand in Ethiopia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco%E2%80%93Italian_Agreement), which Italy desired as a colonial possession. The situation was aggravated in early 1935 when the [Saarland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saarland) was legally reunited with Germany and Hitler repudiated the Treaty of Versailles, speeding up his rearmament program and introducing [conscription](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscription). Hoping to contain Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy formed the [Stresa Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stresa_Front). The Soviet Union, concerned due to [Germany's goals of capturing vast areas of eastern Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drang_nach_Osten), concluded a treaty of mutual assistance with France.

Before taking effect though, the [Franco-Soviet pact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-Soviet_Treaty_of_Mutual_Assistance) was required to go through the bureaucracy of the [League of Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Nations), rendering it essentially toothless.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wwii#cite_note-9)[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wwii#cite_note-10) In June 1935, the United Kingdom made an [independent naval agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-German_Naval_Agreement) with Germany easing prior restrictions. The United States, concerned with events in Europe and Asia, passed the [Neutrality Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neutrality_Act) in August.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wwii#cite_note-11) In October, Italy [invaded Ethiopia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Italo-Abyssinian_War), with Germany the only major European nation supporting her invasion. Italy then revoked objections to Germany's goal of making [Austria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria) a satellite state.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wwii#cite_note-12)